

/163 cont./

- 122 In particular he urged haste, for with the disappearance of the sun at the /164/ beginning of November the most frightful snowstorms customarily set in, which are very dangerous, especially on the tundra.

Unfortunately we did not have much time to converse with him, because night had already fallen and we still had a good stretch to cover to the balagan of the elder. Sachâr O'ssipowitsch made us a gift of some fresh white and rye bread and a magnificent fish (néljma), a delicacy missing for a long time; we then left him, after he had most cordially invited us to stay at his house in Ssiktjách upon our return trip, even in his absence.

In the balagan of the elder we were greeted by his wife and given the best places, next to the fire, and the elder could not be talked out of showing us and our men hospitality with fat reindeer meat and frozen milk. The people here obviously had a better way of life than our Tungus friends along the Tunguska, who were certainly not poor.

- 342 For the first time we found ourselves in a Jakut /Yakut/ balagan and had to admit that in severe cold it was much to be
 [333] preferred to our light tshum /choom/. Such a balagan, or
 [335] yurt, also called stan when it is used as a station at the same time, and powárnja, that is, kitchen, by some travelers, is a rectangular hut with garret-shaped, sloping side-walls and a flat roof, made out of tree trunks, which are plastered with clay on the outside and are thickly covered with snow in the winter. Any cracks are carefully plugged up with moss from the inside.
 [354] The windows consist of thick sheets of ice; in the middle
 [352] stands a Jakut fireplace (kamelók), likewise made out of clay-plastered logs and around this are a number of sleeping places, that is, simple wooden chests without bottoms, which are filled with stamped-down earth /165/ and therefore provide neither a soft bed nor, since they extend directly to the outer
 • [362] wall, a warm one; there are usually six of them. To be sure,
 [122] such a balagan still leaves much to be desired; in particular the fireplace usually stands too far from the sleeping places and during the night frightful cold comes in through the wide,

/165 cont./

- 342 not always closable chimney, if it is not heated--nevertheless
 ● [362] we were pleased by the news that on our journey, especially on
 [122] the return trip, we would for the most part reach balagans for
 [123] spending the night, and only now, on the first two days of travel
 and then on the tundra, must content ourselves with the tschum,
 for which, incidentally, we obtained as a loan from our host a
 fine leather covering. /The remainder of the chapter, pp. 165-
 166, is omitted in the translation; see the foreign text./

/167/

Eighth Chapter

Travel by narten: -- The timber line. -- The parallel of the
 North Cape. -- The settlement of Kulady on the Pur. -- Wolves.
 -- Preparations for the tundra journey. -- Popular lectures for
 Jakuten /Yakut/. -- Patriarchal customs. -- Purga. -- The vil-
 lage of Boljkalák or Ustj-Olénskoje. -- Festive reception. --
 Geological data. -- Within sight of the Arctic Ocean. -- Canine
 concert. -- The illustrious dead of the Olenék. -- Fishing and
 hunting. -- Well-being of the natives. -- Exchange of gifts. --
 Off for home! -- Departure from the Olenék. -- Reception in
 Ssiktjach.

/The remainder of p. 167, pp. 168-171, and the first para-
 graph of p. 172 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign
 text. Page 172 continues as follows./

- 122 Thus our trip was assured and all that remained was to pro-
 vide for new, sounder narten /Russ. narta, "sled"/; these were
 finished in the next two days, the ones for Czekanowsky and
 myself even being fitted with leather kibitkas. Meanwhile we
 were profoundly bored during our wait of over four days.
 Czekanowsky had some trees cut down, measured them, and
 counted the annual rings. I had long finished with my magnetic
 and astronomical observations, having positively wrested the
 latter from the unfavorable weather. Thus there was nothing to
 do but chat with the Jakuten through the interpreter, particularly
 with the elder, who had caught cold traveling back and forth and
 therefore was now confined to his room, or rather to the yurt.

/184 cont./

- 224
[435] caught in traps, but is also dug out of its den, as we ourselves had an opportunity to observe on our return journey. The price of a good skin here yields on the average about a ruble, but many different kinds are distinguished according to quality, and the poorer ones are valued at only half a ruble; the winter pelts are, of course, the best. The highly prized blue variety of the arctic fox seems [651] to be practically unknown here. The crown tax as well as the goods purchased from the merchants are paid for with the skins of the arctic fox.
- [543] Around Easter a kind of annual fair is held here, at which appear both the inhabitants of the islands lying in front of the mouth of the Olenék and those from the nearest settlements of the forest region, in order /185/ to trade skins for the necessary commodities [571] from the traders -- tobacco, tea, cloth, ironware, etc. Despite the inhospitable climate the people here seem to be well off and [512] very content. Even during the dark months they go about their [132] activities out in the open, especially fishing, and only about the time of the reappearance of the sun, around the Day of the Holy Three Kings (sixth of January, old style), when the most frightful snowstorms set in, do they shut themselves up completely -- often 342 for a couple of weeks -- in their dwellings. The latter are much
● 362 more solidly built than in the forest region, in order to offer sufficient resistance against the force of the storms. The material 313 for building as well as for heating consists of driftwood which is supplied by the river and even more by the ocean. Besides the 797 merchants, Boljkalák is also visited almost annually by a missionary, who holds services in the chapel here. Chitrow praises the devoutness of the people -- the outward signs of this did not remain unnoticed by us either.
- 554 On the day after our arrival the elder (stárosta) of the
292 Kangaláss Jakuten /Yakut/ appeared with fresh reindeer for the
123 return journey. He ranked higher than both the local elder and the one accompanying us and wore, as a mark of distinction, a sort of uniform, a yellowish gray cloth coat with red trimming 233 and a gold-embroidered belt with a short sword. The new reindeer, which had to be given a day of rest, and the previous ones